

Keep your fingers on the pulse: EC launches new anti-corruption package!

Press Release - Brussels, 6 June 2011 - Transparency International (TI), the global coalition against corruption, celebrates the adoption of a new EU-wide anti-corruption package that the European Commission announces today. This is considered a first step in responding to the issue of corruption in the EU. The Union's newly introduced reporting tool has the potential to encourage further anti-corruption efforts on the EU Member State level.

It is hoped that the new reporting tool may help reduce the risk of crises such as in Greece and Portugal in future. It may also assist in the assessment of a country's public finances for international aid packages, as currently undertaken by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Central Bank. However, in the long run, there is an urgent need for a more comprehensive anti-corruption strategy encompassing all EU policies.

In detail, the package will include:

- A Communication on fighting corruption in the EU;
- A Commission Decision establishing an EU anti-corruption reporting mechanism;
- A report on the implementation of Council Framework Decision [2003/568/JHA](#) on combating corruption in the private sector; and
- A report on the modalities of EU participation in the Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)

The new EU reporting tool across the EU27 will not replicate anti-corruption review mechanisms already existing under various international standards (UNCAC, OECD, GRECO) but will allow the Commission to evaluate Member States' progress in upholding their commitments against corruption, highlight particular, country-specific areas of concern and, in so doing, increase the tools available for the Commission to tailor anti-corruption approaches at the Member State level.

Assessment results of the Union's anti-corruption reporting mechanism will allow the Union to take up a prominent political voice against corruption, integrity gaps and maladministration - all of which come at high cost for society. By so doing, the Commission is ultimately responding to the demands of citizens that want to see the EU lending more weight to the fight against corruption (see e.g. [TI's 2010 Global Corruption Barometer](#)).

However, while the Communication shows increased political will in the fight against corruption, there is still more work to be done in ensuring that this political will is matched by a coherent and comprehensive approach. "After paving the way for a more concrete anti-corruption policy, it is now time to define the details and benchmarks of measurement if Member States' anti-corruption efforts are to be evaluated properly", says Jana Mittermaier, Head of the TI-EU Office.

The bare minimum for EU anti-corruption action would be, at least, to consolidate information on the implementation and enforcement of the already existing and

binding international and regional anti-corruption instruments at Member State level. "A regular report outlining corruption risk areas can act as an early-warning tool against future corruption-related crises across EU Member States and be a springboard towards fostering new developments," says Mittermaier.

To live up to EU citizens' expectations and to tackle corruption in the European Union the Commission should apply a holistic approach, including:

- **Simultaneous, timely** assessment of the state of affairs of all 27 EU Member States;
- **Flexible** assessment of country-specific areas that are particularly prone to corruption;
- **Consolidated** information on Member States' anti-corruption efforts (incl. UNCAC, OECD and GRECO review results) in a regional report, including all country-by-country reports;
- **Effective** in terms of publicly encouraging compliance by outlining corruption risks, trends and possible weaknesses and offering best practices and, thus, ideally foster exchange among EU Member States

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Transparency International is the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption

Note to Editors: There are Transparency International (TI) chapters in almost every EU member state, accession candidate and potential candidate state. For more information on TI's views regarding anti-corruption and the EU visit: www.transparencyinternational.eu

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